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Statement by EU High Representative Catherine Ashton  on the death sentences in Belarus

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made the following statement today:

"I condemn absolutely all acts of terrorism, and my thoughts and sympathy are with the victims of the terrible attacks in Belarus and with their families.

Nevertheless, I regret that the Supreme Court decided yesterday to sentence Dzmitry Kanavalaw and Uladzislaw Kavalyow to death. I hope that their right to appeal can be fully exercised.

The European Union opposes capital punishment under all circumstances. The death penalty is considered to be a cruel and inhuman punishment, which fails to act as a deterrent and represents an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity. I therefore urge Belarus, the only country in Europe still applying it, to join a global moratorium on the death penalty as a first step towards its universal abolition."